

\$2

NOVEMBER 1, 2024 | VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 23

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

One commission towards a better
police mission. **page 8**



JOE WOODS
#103

ASK YOUR
VENDOR:
WHAT ARE YOU
THANKFUL
FOR?

GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Tracy Bennett's
puzzle journey:
NYT Wordle
Editor bids
farewell to
Groundcover.
page 6

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM



Photo credit: Allison Wei

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

Groundcover is a critical asset in Washtenaw County: we are seeking 1-2 new members for our board

In 2010 Susan Beckett, a public school teacher, decided to create an opportunity for individuals in Washtenaw County, most of whom were living on the street, to earn income for themselves. She wasn't trying to "solve" poverty — most teachers understand practical limitations — but as a teacher she understood that **meaningful occupation is a critical first step toward responsible social participation**. And from this simple idea Groundcover News was born.

Groundcover News is a street paper. Street papers exist all over the world — they even have their own international organization, the International Network of Street Papers (www.insp.ngo/) which supports information sharing and best practices with a yearly conference. There is enormous variety across these papers but most of them share local news and events that typically provide topics most relevant to the individuals who sell the paper.

- Groundcover is unique among these street papers in so far as we:
- Provide fair compensation for writers (who are typically vendors)
 - Offer employment skills training workshops
 - Provide an informal infrastructure



ANNA GERSH, PhD
Groundcover Board President

of care that supports participating vendors

- Provide referrals to other nonprofits and agencies
- Hold and promote community-serving events
- Invite guest writers from our community partners
- Offer an opportunity for community feedback

"For the poor will be with you always..." - Matthew 26:11

Since its inception, Groundcover News has provided low-barrier employment to over 650 individual vendors. Many of them are burdened with not only the effects of extreme poverty, including but not at all limited to homelessness, but also the

frequently inescapable co-morbidities like mental illness and addiction.

As an organization we have struggled with our image. The dance between facilitating personal autonomy with an income-generating opportunity and close personal management that anticipates the predictable challenges of hiring individuals who represent these demographics is a delicate one.

In the last couple of years Groundcover News has grown. Last year we faced many challenges but in the face of these challenges, we have developed our leadership and our community partnerships to more effectively address problems when they occur. We have also expanded our reach throughout Washtenaw County; we have hired a publisher who is also a social worker; and we have deepened our partnerships with other community-serving entities including the Ann Arbor District Library, Washtenaw Literacy, MISSION and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County.

And there is SO MUCH potential in an established print journal that is already dedicated to local concerns. We want to develop Groundcover News to better serve Washtenaw

County and we need new board members to support this visioning. If you have any interest in joining our board we invite you to fill out the short application (QR Code below this article).

We are looking for new board members with an appreciation of the fact that whether you like it or not, the social fabric is complex and there are many creative ways to support Community. Thank you so much for your consideration.



Application to join the
Groundcover Board of
Directors

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes toward production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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ASK YOUR VENDOR

What are you thankful for?

The ability to change how I think for the better. That changed my life.
— Joe Woods, #103

I'm healthy, wealthy and wise.
— Tony Schohl, #9

I'm grateful that a doctor finally listened to me and that I'm living.
— Terri Demar, #322

Having my own apartment to live in and do what I want in.
— Denise Shearer, #485

For spiritual friends.
— Ken Parks, #490

That I'm with Groundcover, that I have friends and have money in my pocket everyday. I'm blessed!
— Pony Bush, #305

Being healthy.
— Juliano Sanchez, #174

That I have enough common sense that I don't end up in people's nonsense.
— Wayne Sparks, #615

I'm thankful for the fact that every single day offers something new and exciting. I'm extremely thankful for the fact my life is low-key right now.
— Cindy Gere, #279

For JESUS!; For Song! To Praise HIM With, For Nature To EXPERIENCE HIM Through; For The Christian Guy I'm asking HIM For; For my Mummy-Kins (Mom!) 'EEE' ; For Christian Fellowship, For FREEDOM; For Groundcover; For Miracles big and 'Small' ; For SAFETY and ESSENTIALS; For Apple Cobbler; For my BELOVED Pets, For Sunshine, and For Mashed-Potatoes W/butter, Gravy, and Sometimes W/ Chicken-broth!
— Amanda Gale, #573

Keep the torch lit!



MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113



The lines in the sand have been drawn in more ways than one. In this case it's democracy or autocracy — or should I say, a so-called democracy, or a potential autocracy? Did you know 71% of the world's population is ruled or governed by an autocracy? That means if this democracy fails here in the United States of America, and is turned into an autocracy, liberty's light of freedom on earth would be rendered dim.

Millions of voters in America are not too thrilled about the two candidates they have to choose from. A large percentage of voters

consider themselves voting for the lesser evil and it shouldn't have to be that way. When one casts a ballot, one wants to be in full support of the candidate's ideas and values. As we have it, neither candidate shares the values I believe in. Nevertheless, through my struggles in whether or not to participate in the 2024 election, I decided to do my duty and cast my ballot because I still believe in the ideals of democracy.

Voters like myself must seize this opportunity. I am not voting for

either candidate; I'm voting for my ideas of freedom, and what I think this country should be and what it shouldn't be. I consider myself fortunate to have the opportunity to vote, and encourage all that can to do the same.

We voters can't be naive. No matter who wins the presidency, we will have a lot of work to do in order for liberty's bell to ring and be heard throughout the world. But we must first keep liberty's torch lit from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

Trump and Harris housing policies

D.A.
Groundcover contributor

I interviewed someone for this article based on their views and outlook towards the Trump and Harris housing policies when it comes to the low-income and middle class United States citizens. This is a male who is in his sixties; let's refer to him as Mr. Leon.

First Mr. Leon stated that he will be voting for Vice President Kamala Harris because she has proposed expanding the financing options for affordable housing and promoting the conversion of empty office space into apartments. Mr. Leon is a middle-class retiree who still works to supplement his income and utilizes affordable housing supports. He is grateful for the supportive programs. As far as he is concerned when it comes to former President Donald Trump, he says he refuses to trust in someone who has been

named in lawsuits for fraud and other felonious activities.

Mr. Leon trusts that V.P. Harris will do what is in the best interest of the low-income people and families of America. Affordable housing is essential to a lot of things. This allows us to have access to the basics that get us through the day and offers the necessary safe and habitable shelter for rest and preparing meals. It is hard to obtain and maintain employment without these things. They go hand in hand.

Mr. Leon recalls that former President Donald Trump has denied employment to poor people and has been discriminatory in his housing practices. He does not believe that Trump will do anything for low-income housing or for aiding new homebuyers. He does not agree with how Trump is disrespectful and self-oriented. This isn't all about him.

Here is an example of how housing policy has generationally affected Black Americans throughout the U.S. Democrats have worked to implement programs that provide mortgage assistance and financial support for Black contractors and home building companies. The Harris administration will pump billions of dollars into our communities. Trump's plans are to give trillions in tax breaks to real estate moguls and wealthy entities to build expensive, exclusive projects — using public tax dollars to increase the wealth of billionaire class. The top 1% percent of the nation who already control 90% percent of the private wealth of the U.S citizenry.

Last but not least, Mr. Leon just hopes that whoever is elected won't result in the loss of more housing for the low-income and middle class population with growing rent rates and costs of homeownership. He wants to see America as Americans united for the good of the U.S. and not a divided country.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES

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1/8	\$110.00	\$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	\$145.00	\$200.00	5 X 4
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1/2	\$375.00	\$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	\$650.00	\$900.00	10.25 X 13

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Six Months/Twelve Issues: 25% off
Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: 35% off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: 40% off
Additional 20% discount for money saving coupons

Beyond this election: FREEDOM ALL, FREEDOM BEST. Let's cast our vote for Harris-Walz!

AMANDA GALE
Groundcover vendor No. 573

This election season has not failed to top each of the recent 20-30 years' national elections — for drama, intrigue and for what-all is at stake. "We the people ..." of United States have a CLEAR, DISTINCTIVE pathway, we MUST FULFILL and OPT for-IF for a good majority yet from and for humanity, to yet ourselves SEEK for GOOD from and for ourselves, as a race of people — human.

If we have done ourselves the great DIS-SERVICE of electing the campaign that ENSLAVES us — by abolishing the document that from ourselves first suggested we have EVERY RIGHT to be FREE, and that our persons INNATELY and INHERENTLY ARE FREE! — we will have simply EVIDENCED the HORROR OF OUR fallenness — by making it that MUCH MORE DIFFICULT for ourselves for SEEKING, "The GOOD."

Of course, we might have opted to not know anymore what "the GOOD" is. A belief in RELATIVISM has been exchanged for a belief in some basic standard mores that once were ASSUMED and ACCEPTED — by those of us CONCEIVED and BORN under this WILD notion that we ARE and actually COULD BE / CAN BE — FREE!

IF we have elected a mere "end justifies the means" INSTEAD OF A BEST DIRECTION AHEAD pathway; IF we will have SUR-RENDERED ourselves to the MAGA CULT OF THE MOST RECENT deceiving though seeming charismatic personality — who has PLAINLY told us he will STEAL AWAY / ERODE our FREEDOMS yet further, and under a GUISE of being a protector for us — we will begin experiencing the HORRORS of LOSING our FREEDOMS — beginning with "the Least of us" who are in NEED vocationally and financially, who have already been quite OVERLOOKED for our POTENTIALITIES and GIFTS by a larger, ELITE society; and we'll have to work that MUCH HARDER!

IF we have APPROVED for a direction that criminalizes "*the Least of These*" who are homeless and/or who reside atypically for modern times — and even do so under a GUISE of as if "PRO-LIFE" — UTTER SHAME! to us.

If we have selected the candidate who has already at times at previous campaign rallies ordered, "arrest that person!" to some ACTUALLY PEACEFUL PROTESTORS who were MERELY SEEKING in that way to EXPOSE and RESCUE! Humanity from the WORST that could be from itself — TRUE HORROR! will be upon us.

If we have selected an elitist modus operandi that SHAMES and BLAMES those recognized as being "NEEDY" among us; and also even mandates further DEPRIVATIONS for those who are deemed as if

being the non-SUPERIORS among us — WOE! to us.

WHAT!? are we INVITING onto Humanity — if we EXCLUDE and DEPRIVE those not deemed as being under our group of "the approved;" when we PREVENT/DENY their SKILLS and CAPABILITIES — though by which so DOING simply actually exposes/ reveals our own GROSS! and EXTREME NEEDS if we ourselves are the elitists?

If while claiming we DEPLORE the IMPERIALISTIC IMPOSINGS and CON-DEMNNINGS that have occurred in South America, and on our own continent, and all throughout history in various places we vote for that which even BLATANTLY tells us its INTENTIONS are to do the SAME, here, now, and by starting with those who are simply The MOST VULNERABLE, and the least popular among us as a people and society — is that not APPROVAL of our own hypocrisies?

Of course there are these people who we will begin with who are "heinous criminals" who have crossed-over the border and we use them as our beginning point for scapegoating and deportation — not allowing ourselves the REALIZATION that at some point, we're NEXT!

Is it "a GOOD Thing" for us to ANNIHILATE ourselves? How do we know if we even ACTUALLY EXIST — or even if there is actual GOOD, and WHAT IT IS?

We NEED a STARTING POINT!

As a Christian of course I realize THE BIBLE as GOD'S Objective LOVE-letter to the Human Race is inviting us to HIS Redemption and WHOLENESS. Outside of that, though, could there even yet be MERCIES and GRACES for humanity that ISN'T even Christian? What does that require? How can we "get there?" Will we ever REALLY, "arrive?"

As a Christian I believe "arrival" by only mere finite, fallen means — is DOOMED! Nonetheless, I believe in a GOD who is SO! MERCIFUL that HE DOESN'T SEEK to ABANDON us to our own ultimately wicked ends; but WHO OFFERS us EACH and ALL the OPPORTUNITY to ourselves even OPT for at least what will be even if just in this LIFE a pathway of MORE PEACE and LESS SUFFERINGS — if we WILL.

Have we now decided to be no special place of inspiration, to be no HARBOR for the WEARY and WANDERING, to UNDO our U.S. Constitutional Limitation of Powers — including and ESPECIALLY for our "Chief Executive?"

Do we now NEED a self-proclaimed Martial Law "Protector" — to mete out to and upon us — the (supposed) freedoms for ourselves we are REFUSING? If SUBJUGATION and SUPPRESSION are the means by which we procure birth, *what have we (*) wrought? And then blamed GOD for?*

And, WHY NOT? Follow after the dictates

from other countries? Surely it's "a better way," such as China mandates/IMPOSES — when and IF? for family and children. Sure, you want Russia and "good 'ole putin" to tell you, you MUST! be! and CAN ONLY be! a factory worker, a dentist, a kgb informant, et cetera. And you CANNOT! be the sculptor, the chef, the dentist, or factory worker that you! yourself! WANT to be! *You CAN'T even have FREEDOM of press to even print Groundcover!*

If you're a Christian, listen to Job's lament: "Oh that I had been aborted/mis-carried — INSTEAD of birthed into MIS-ERABLE SUFFERINGS!" If you're not a Christian, please listen to even just the GLAD common sense of patriot Patrick Henry: "*Give me liberty, or give me death.*"

However perhaps we will have already instead decided to REJECT the bribe and supposed "justification" of trading our liberties? Let us Hope and Pray we will have already in a simplest way — our Vote — have decided for, the least egregiously consequential way for ourselves. Let us Hope and Pray we will have already DETERMINED that we WILL NOT! EVER! SUR-RENDER our Souls and liberties to anyone! for ANY! reason — NO MATTER WHAT!

Are we already REALIZING that a surrenderee always sooner or later LOSES! that which is PRECIOUS and perhaps might NEVER! be REGAINED?

Do we LIKE it now already — when police OVERSTEP our FREEDOMS and our RIGHTS, and the boundaries — ethical and/or legal of the ENTRUSTMENT of their authority? And WHY!? Did Kwame Kilpatrick receive a jail term, while donald trump is pursuing a second term!?

Have we CHOSEN the National Executive Team whose INTEGRITY and up-front indications can lead the way for ALL the BEST they are ASSURING for? Or have we settled for the supposed pair that merely as all dictators do, gives us only duping, changeable, INCONGRUITIES for FREEDOM and LIFE?

Will we kowtow to the hitler-praising bloodbath threat or AFFIRM our *potentialities and responsibilities FOR THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD!?*

Of course we might not even know what? Or if "GOOD" — IS? Or if so; WHAT? IT IS?

However, did it feel "REAL GOOD" to have to LIVE in FEAR of possible germ WARFARE on our own shores — via trump? Or, maybe you REALLY liked all those CLAMPING DOWN RESTRICTIONS like, we're even AFRAID to breathe or cough or sneeze around each other, and we CAN'T even be around or near each other for concerts, or playgrounds, or LOVE. And say, HOW? did fauci (*) "*know*?"

Of course we know that the people from totalitarian countries are JUST BEGGING! for an EXPANSION of the dictates OVER

them, leaving NO ALTERNATIVE ANYWHERE! We know that they URGE us to ACCEPT! as BEST-human "whatever" whims a dictator and/or successor might RULE.

Though maybe we have yet CHOSEN the TEAM who will lead only by the CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED who welcome ACCOUNTABILITY from "we the people ..." instead of COMPLETE "IMMUNITY" for themselves!

Is leadership for us that which we ELECT, ENTRUSTING us, EMPOWERING us? Or have we decided for a particular individual and/or oligarch to CANCEL OUT our WILL, and AT ANY time themselves instead Determining what we "NEED?"

But IF you will promote BETRAYAL OF FREEDOMS even as the supposed means for "you and yours" by which to SAVE others and supposedly result in a "Utopia," that's on you! For "you and yours." If however "you and yours" STRIP AWAY FREEDOM for "me and mine" — I ask you: is THAT WHAT you DESIRE, FROM *me*?

Now if I am in any way DISSENTING, WHAT will you do with me? SURELY NOTHING LESS than the "mind-control" and TORTURE that typically occurs to expatriates SEEKING to EXPOSE and/or FREE us from "*the Regime*?"

I may LOVE you in CHRIST, or even as a human being. However, I'll NOT! OPT to even SAVE your unborn children — so that you ENSLAVE! me and mine!

If we truly want to INSURE LIFE, this DOESN'T occur by MERELY MANDATING birth.

So this election is NOT! merely a selection, but a REFERENDUM.

Do "we the people ..." value FREEEDOM and LIFE, or the MIRAGE of IMPOSTERS?

Guess what? It's NOT! TOO LATE!! (I learned while being an election inspector previously when resident in Canton, that even if you've already voted — like absentee, or even while at the polls — and you realize you have made a TERRIBLE ERROR, you have the right up until the close of the polls on election night to destroy that erring ballot and to cast as best possible for all the good and best that American seeks to be.)

So, LET'S BE SURE TO VOTE! And to VOTE BEST! FOR our FREEDOMS!

I am ASSURED even NONETHELESS that IF "we the people ..." somehow FAIL ourselves for our chosen outcome for this election — that even the WORST IMMEDIATE and/or ULTIMATE SUFFERINGS and WRONG ways of going that might occur — WILL NOT! be what ULTIMATELY PREVAILS. I KNOW this because I KNOW JESUS. However, I even know this, because I know that the human spirit that HE Created-Innately MUST and WILL — ultimately also shine through for FREEDOM.



Find the Ypsi Vegan Food Distro outside of 169 N Washington St. on Monday evenings.

Freegan Vegan: local food justice activists help two causes at once

In the front yard of Hospitality House on North Washington St. in Ypsilanti there is a table, a rack and a sign that says "food only." On the table and rack is a constant cornucopia of donated foods ranging from fresh produce to milk and eggs to boxed and canned foods. Recently a group of local food justice activists began adding prepared vegan dishes to the fare found on Monday evenings. Some of the food is prepared by a person who goes by Shanky who is a food justice activist and gardener.

I asked Shanky how the vegan food distro got started. "[Some friends and fellow vegans] met up at the library and threw around some ideas. Then we thought, let's drive around and find people on the street. Let's just start making meals.

"That week FedUp was closed, someone asked if we could do a small distribution; so we came up with 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, Cliff Bars and juice boxes." FedUp Ministries serves meals to the street community.

"Then we got permission to do it in front of Hospitality House. We put out flyers to the farmers market asking for leftover produce. A few other community members donated as well. We had a decent amount of produce to get out. We did some cooking and baking and threw it all together, then handed it out in mismatched containers."

Shanky is an Ypsilanti local who has been on nonprofit boards and helps run several community gardens while teaching people how to grow. She began baking vegan and gluten-free items for her friends with food allergies. On-again-off-again vegetarian, she does eat eggs and uses them in her baking. She also makes her own oat milk but does not



JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

eat honey. Shanky said, "Honey bees are an invasive, non-native that kills other bees by dominating the food sources." Instead of honey, Shanky recommended, "Use maple syrup. It works just as well."

Every Monday offers a chance to see different activists staffing the vegan food distro table. One person, who goes by Cinder, is also a food justice advocate and vegan.

Cinder said, "I have been vegan for ten years now and in that time I haven't done as much activism as I would have liked. I have mostly volunteered at events and worked to share my ideas one-on-one. I have always done volunteering in one way or another, so that aspect has been a part of my life since early childhood. I was keeping my eye out for local opportunities to help the disenfranchised members of our community without compromising my beliefs. I saw a call for volunteers on a local Facebook group and got in contact with the group from there." The group was the vegan food distribution team.

Cinder went on to explain the program. "The food distribution we are doing has a focus on offering a hot vegan meal each week ... We also offer ready-to-eat options, produce, baked goods, and hygiene products

as they become available. The whole program right now is being run by volunteers and a small pool of weekly donations. We are, of course, trying to expand that donation pool. Anyone who wants to reach out about donating food, drinks, or any other vegan products for distribution can reach out in person or via our Facebook page: Vegan Food Distro Ypsilanti."

I asked Cinder what they thought of the relationship between food justice versus housing rights. She answered, "On one level, offering a delicious hot meal of any kind is a step in the right direction. We need to make sure everyone knows where their next meal is coming from as a start. On the level of why vegan specifically, there are a few notes to consider. Firstly, most vegan food lasts longer without refrigeration than traditional options. Secondly, the meals lean heavily on vegetables. The health and energy benefits to whole foods are undeniable. Regular consumption of whole foods is associated with fewer hospital stays, lower risk of cardiac disease and a diminished number of overall health problems. Helping unhoused folks stay as healthy as possible means helping alleviate the potential of large medical expenses over time. We try to offer a variety of fresh produce every week to the same end. Lastly, the environmental, nutritional and community benefits of veganism are truly impossible to ignore. We can help those in our community without adding to the existing issues associated with animal agriculture. So why wouldn't we? Whether homeless or struggling, everyone deserves to eat healthy, delicious food."

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am–8pm Daily
Hang out in any of our five locations across town, browsing books, magazines, newspapers, and more, or check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, and home tools—you name it! Study and meeting rooms, fast and free WiFi, and plenty of places to sit and hang out.

Unusual Stuff to Borrow
There's more to borrow at AADL than books, music, and movies. To name a few, there are games, telescopes, stories-to-go kits, and home tools. Check out these unusual yet handy items during your next library visit.

Washtenaw Library for the Blind & Print Disabled at AADL
This free service loans books, magazines, & videos in alternative formats (audiobooks, large print, braille books & magazines, and descriptive video) to individuals who are unable to read or use standard printed materials. Visit aadl.org/wlbpd/apply to apply.

FEATURED EVENT



Sunday, November 3 • 10am–5pm Downtown Library
Get ready for a literary celebration featuring a vendor floor of booksellers, publishers, and authors from 10am–5pm! Attend keynote author talks, discussion groups, and check out hands-on crafts and storytimes for all ages! Plus, don't miss the Fifth Avenue Press annual author reception celebrating the latest local literary talent. Visit aadl.org/bookfest for a full schedule of the day's events!

Tracy Bennett's puzzle journey: NYT Wordle Editor bids farewell to Groundcover News

ALLISON WEI
Groundcover contributor

You could say that Tracy Bennett was born a puzzle-lover.

Before she could even talk, at 17 months, Bennett was doing jigsaw puzzles, according to her mom. As a young girl, Bennett's appetite for puzzles couldn't be stopped: she did her older sister's jigsaw puzzles then moved on to crossword puzzles.

At 17, she did her first New York Times crossword at a friend's house and fell in love with it. But she couldn't afford to get a New York Times subscription.

"Growing up, we were very poor. I lived in a house with no running water and an outhouse," said Bennett. To feed her love for puzzles, Bennett asked neighbors and friends for their NYT crosswords.

Decades later, Bennett has gone from not being able to afford a NYT subscription to being the NYT's first and only Wordle editor. As an associate puzzle editor, Bennett also edits crosswords and Strands.

"It's my dream job," said Bennett.

But for the longest time, puzzling was just a hobby. Never could she have imagined it would turn into a career.

Originally from Maine, Bennett moved to Michigan to study English literature at the University of Michigan, joining her sister at U-M. She's been in Ann Arbor ever since.

It was here, in one of America's most well-read cities, that Bennett discovered her love for words.

"In my senior year, I became fascinated with how words worked," said Bennett. Post-grad, she considered a masters in linguistics or publishing. She ended up choosing the latter, working as a copy editor for the journal Mathematical Reviews.

Here, she further honed her love for language. "I loved editing. It was like working in two different languages: technical math language is a language in and of itself, but I was also working with a lot of non-native English speakers."

Working at Mathematical Reviews, Bennett was content. Life went on. She got married. Had a son. She continued pursuing puzzles, but only on the side.

In 2010, at the urging of a friend, she entered a local puzzle solving contest and won. Afterward, she entered the American Crossword Tournament. "I didn't do well as a competitor, but I met people who make puzzles for the first time. It was like a light turned on — I saw that people don't just solve

puzzles, but make them. That sounded so wonderful to me."

Bennett began learning how to construct puzzles under mentor Victor Fleming, who's had his crosswords published in the New York Times and co-contributed crosswords to Groundcover.

In 2013, Bennett had her first crossword published in the New York Times. In 2014, she got her first job offer as a puzzle constructor at Bust magazine. She started creating puzzles for Crosswords with Friends.

All this came at a cost. "I was still working my day job, raising a child, and doing puzzles on top of all this. I was getting up at 5 a.m. or going to bed late exhausted just to get everything done," said Bennett.

Making puzzles is hard work. "It's very time consuming to make a puzzle, it can take me three days to make a good one," said Bennett.

Beyond skill, it wasn't easy breaking into the puzzle making scene. "The puzzle industry was primarily white-male dominated," said Bennett. "When I first started, there were these 16-20 year old Computer Science major phenoms being celebrated. As a 40 year old mom with a whole other career, I wasn't really getting the same attention."

That's part of why in her puzzle career, inclusivity has always been important to her. At Bust, Bennett created crosswords with feminist themes. In 2017, she co-founded the Inkubator: a magazine that trains women and non-binary folks how to create crosswords and pays them for their work.

"I started to feel like I was really making puzzles for a living and my day job was just paying the bills. In 2020, when the job for associate puzzle editor at The New York Times opened up, I applied and got it," said Bennett.

"I was in my late 50s and made a major career change."

Bennett was hired at the same time as Wyna Liu, who edits Connections. "When I joined the Times, it was pretty much exclusively white male ... but they were trying to expand that."

Since she joined NYT, Bennett has continued focusing on inclusivity. One way she does this is through mentorship — she's mentored three people through the NYT's Diverse Crossword Constructor Fellowship.

"When you think of inclusivity, you always think of race and gender, but there's also subtle ageism. It's hard to be treated like you're amazing when you're older and starting a new hobby — that's something I'm sensitive to



Do you play the popular New York Times puzzle game, Wordle? The same person who picks the word of the day has been contributing puzzles to Groundcover News for five years.

since I started making puzzles in my forties. One of my mentees was in her seventies."

Bennett also keeps in mind inclusivity when choosing the Wordle word of the day. "When you make a puzzle, who are you assuming is solving the puzzle? Who are you excluding when you say a word is obscure?"

"I wanted to expand the narrative of who's solving the puzzle — to make more people feel seen and included in the story."

That hasn't come without challenges. "I got complaints when I ran the word 'MANGA' and people didn't know what it was. I got the same reaction for 'PENNE' (like the pasta). People thought I was trying to trick them with some weird foreign word but it's not foreign — it's English ... so that's a barrier I'm constantly pushing against."

Dealing with backlash is something Bennett has had to learn since joining the Times. "When I first started, I decided to do a few themed words. I ran 'FEAST' for Thanksgiving. There was so much furor over that word. Slate magazine ran an article titled 'The New Wordle Editor Is Ruining Wordle.'"

"The response to that — it was a wake up call," said Bennett, a self-described introvert who's most comfortable behind her computer.

Despite the pressures of being in the limelight, it's worth it. Some of Bennett's favorite parts of being a Wordle editor are what she calls "moments of magical synchronicity" — when a word magically lines up with some-

thing happening in someone's life.

"I ran 'CAROL' one day. A woman wrote to me saying that that day was her mother's memorial service — her mom's name was Carol and she was a lifelong Wordle lover."

A lot of intentionality goes behind choosing the five letter Wordle. Created by James Wardle in 2020, Wordle has a set bank of 2400 five letter words.

"I set a random generator from 1 to 2400. If we haven't run that word already, I'll set that word up for the week. I do this until I have 7 picks and then order them in the order I think flows best."

Before moving forward, Bennett researches each word. "I look up the meaning in the dictionary and research the word's secondary and tertiary meanings to make sure I'm not offending anyone." Bennett is also careful about context. "If there's something in the news like October 7th, I try to choose a bland word. We try to be sensitive about what we're putting out there."

The words go to a dedicated team of puzzle solvers for testing before finally being approved.

Bennett brings that same passion to her work at Groundcover. Since 2019, Bennett has been making some of the Groundcover crosswords, after being referred by Peter Collins, a fellow Ann Arborite who's published 100+ crosswords in the New York Times, and many in Groundcover as well.

Five years of puzzle making for Groundcover behind her, Bennett is

see **CROSSWORD** next page ➡

It's the Great ... Brown Pumpkin, Charlie

SARAH THOLEN
Groundcover contributor

Boldly as the acorns drop, the Fall imbeds itself.
'Tis the season, once again, for candles on the shelf!
Before we could prepare,
In came the Autumn air,
And with it, crafts for Halloween that you can "do yourself!"

"I know that this will be the year I check off my whole list; I'll bake a cake, and decorate, and even shop for gifts!"
My problem is severe,
For every single year,
Not one, not two, but all my goals are regularly missed.

Though the ghosts of those Fall hopes may seem to haunt me still,
I have a trick to treat myself and keep moving uphill!
Although I should refrain,
With every task, I gain
A chocolate-peanut-butter pumpkin Reese's, freshly chilled.

Its ratio of sweet to savory really should be studied,
For when I eat one, it insists I must send down a buddy.
It tastes so, so divine
I truly fear a crime
Where wolfing down this chocolate treat incites a fight quite bloody.

Dare I say, this reward method truly won me over,
Managing to keep me going all throughout October.
But soon it will be time,
When having passed its prime,
The great brown pumpkin is replaced with trees by every grocer.

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➡ **CROSSWORD** from last page

now bidding farewell. "I have too many projects going on outside of my day job, but I will still probably submit some when I have the time."

"It's been really cool volunteering with Groundcover ... I love being downtown and seeing someone selling Groundcover. I'll always buy it and eagerly look at the back to see the puzzle."

At the end of the day, Bennett

says her mission is to create joy. "Puzzles are little problems you can solve rather than problems you can't solve. Nobody making puzzles wants to trick you. They want you to solve it."

In an increasingly complex world where it's easy to feel overwhelmed, those small wins matter. "Bringing joy and meaning to other people's lives ... that's what puzzles are all about."




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One commission towards a better police mission

ELI SRI RANGARAJAN
U-M student contributor

On November 9, 2014, Aura Rosser was shot and killed in her own home by Ann Arbor police. In the following days, months and years, Ann Arbor's community alongside the growing nationwide Black Lives Matter movement, took action and protested against racist policing and the lack of police accountability throughout the US. No matter how hard we fight, it can often feel like no change actually occurs. Political figures constantly leave us with empty promises rather than tangible solutions. But, even if it's hard to notice, there is change.

In 2018, as a result of the mobilization of communities across our country in alliance with BLM, Ann Arbor's Independent Community Police Oversight Commission (ICPOC) was formed. With a goal of not only reducing harmful policing but improving community police relations as a whole, every aspect of its creation was intertwined with community feedback.

The Commission consists of 11 voting members, one of whom is a youth member, and most of whom are part of specific committees within ICPOC. Committees include the

policy, training, outreach and information committees. The bulk of each Commission meeting consists of reports from these committees followed by discussion among Commission members on ways to handle the issues that arise.

At the September 24 meeting I attended, for example, the policy committee presented a concern surrounding the legal requirement for police body cameras. A complaint had been received that a specific policeman had arbitrarily switched off his body camera while at a University of Michigan protest, despite the potential for escalation. As Commissioner Randy Milgrom argued, legislation surrounding these cameras is extremely ambiguous, especially when these cameras are vital in holding police accountable. What followed was an engaged discussion between the Commission and Ann Arbor Police Chief Andre Anderson who attends the meetings alongside colleagues. The result was not only an increased understanding on the issue from both sides, but an agreement that in the subsequent days AAPD would revise the policies and send them to the commission for reapproval.

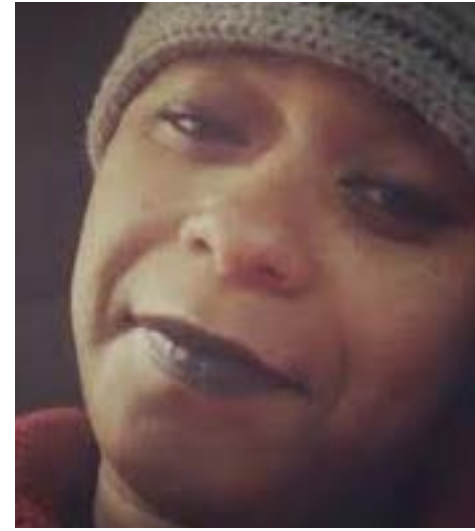
It was somewhat shocking. Police

and the Commission actually seemed to be listening to each other. AAPD seemed to understand that this was an opportunity to improve, and the commission did as well.

In an environment often rife with polarity, the space invited a mutual respect that was extremely refreshing. At the closure of the meeting, ICPOC Commissioner Bonnie Billups went out of his way to explicitly thank officers who had shown compassion in their work in a specific situation. It truly felt like both sides were fighting for our community.

Distrust has defined our police-community relations in the past, and although ICPOC is nowhere close to an all-encompassing solution, this type of collaboration and communication is the first necessary step towards an environment where police and the community support and engage with each other rather than demonize and clash with each other. It is a symbol that the constant effort so many have dedicated to reducing racist and brutal policing might actually be paying off.

ICPOC meetings occur once a month; the next one will be held Tuesday, November 26 from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. ICPOC's public office hours (which allow other community



It has been 10 years since Aura Rosser was murdered by the Ann Arbor police.

members to be heard in the dialogue surrounding healthy policing) are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Any community member can attend these meetings. A police complaint form can be found on their website: <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/city-clerk/Boards-and-Commissions/Pages/Independent-Community-Police-Oversight-Commission.aspx>

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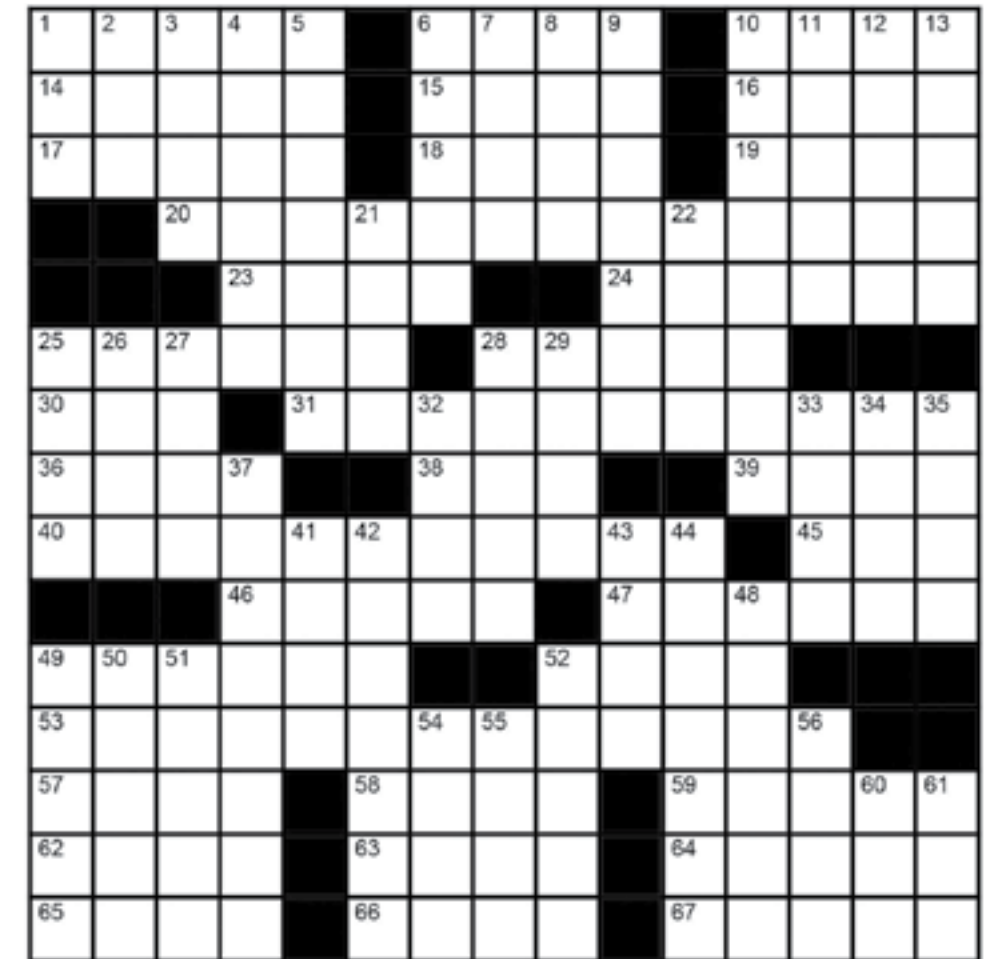
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ACROSS

1. Bakery attraction
6. Snitch
10. Pod dwellers
14. Observatory observations
15. Hip bones
16. With 1-Down and 27-Down, complain at length
17. ___ list
18. Go for
19. Settle follower
20. European country that's hard to spell
23. Fit of shivering
24. "___ is ___, of course, of course"
25. College treasurer
28. Jellied garnish
30. ___ Today
31. Disinclined
36. Invitation acronym
38. Charged particle
39. Zero, on a court
40. Niece's son
45. "Cool" amount
46. Rainbow ___
47. Festival of lights
49. Denmark's second-largest city
52. Home of the Taj Mahal
53. Femme fatale's fatal footwear?
57. Hit the bottle
58. Amble
59. Band
62. Burden
63. "I had no ___!"
64. Part of a TV feed
65. Gym set
66. "___ of the Flies"
67. Church song

DOWN

1. See 16-Across
2. ___ v. Wade
3. Ellipse
4. Fads
5. African spear
6. Specialty
7. "Thanks ___!"
8. Get up
9. Siestas
10. Set of rules
11. "Purple people ___"
12. Con men?
13. Peach pit
21. Hair piece
22. FedEx, say
25. Town
26. "Back in the ___"
27. See 16-Across
28. Take in
29. Hyperbolic function
32. Place
33. "Brave New World" drug
34. Malevolent
35. Kosher ___
37. Untrodden
41. Exact
42. Frequently pierced place
43. Advantage
44. Bug
48. Tusked mammal
49. Fur trader John Jacob
50. Make amends
51. Shred
52. Winning
54. ___ list
55. Done
56. Fizzy drink
60. Black gold
61. Little dog, for short

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

Cancer survivor, and now COVID survivor, too!

JESSI AVERILL
Groundcover contributor

Over several issues of Groundcover, Ramón Roberto Isla Caballero, vendor No. 347, has shared about his physical and mental health conditions while living unhoused. He has talked about the ongoing hip and chest pains he feels, as well as his routine to drink at night to help him sleep outside on the busy downtown street.

Ramón turns 66 years old in December. Since returning to Ann Arbor during the pandemic he has only stayed inside overnight for a handful of days. Growing older while living unhoused makes it very hard for Ramón to keep good health. Fortunately, he is constantly checked on by Washtenaw County Community Mental Health's street outreach team, PATH. They help him consistently schedule and travel to his doctor appointments. They also help him get the medicines his doctor prescribes.

Early in October Ramón started experiencing more severe chest pains, mostly related to acid reflux. He started thinking the medicine he was taking was not working. He canceled an upcoming doctor's appointment and

stressed to his CMH caseworker that he did not want to take the medicine anymore because he was not getting better. However, Ramón was continuing to drink alcohol somewhat heavily despite the doctor telling him it could worsen his acid reflux and affect the medicine that is supposed to help him with it. The caseworker asked Ramón if he would like to try staying at a local recovery center to see if it could help him with reducing his drinking.

Both Groundcover and PATH staff helped prepare Ramón for moving into the center. He brought all his belongings to the Groundcover office, then PATH had an Uber pick him up to bring him to the center. Before entering the program he needed to take a COVID test. He tested positive. He had to wait at least 10 days before he could come back to try again.

PATH made sure that Ramón was set up in a hotel to isolate and recover from COVID. He was now sleeping inside for the first time in a long, long time! At the hotel Ramón was able to shower, eat regularly and rest. He also was able to use a phone (his cell phone was stolen a while ago) which made it easier for his CMH caseworkers to stop by and check on him as well as

Groundcover staff to plan meal drop-offs as part of his wellness care. Ramón started feeling much better and soon recovered from COVID. But the best news of all: Ramón was no longer drinking. To-date it has been over three weeks since he had a drink! During this time he has not been having acid reflux or chest pains. Other changes have been no more shaky hands or rapid breathing.

Ramón has not returned yet to try the recovery center, but he is working with CMH to get placed in housing in Ann Arbor. This is huge news: Ramón was resistant to housing options in the past because he would say, "give it to someone else who needs it." CMH is also working on ordering him a mobile phone.

While he waits for the new housing placement, Ramón has not been selling Groundcover New papers because he does not want to be far from the hotel phone in case his caseworkers need to reach him. He still stops by the Groundcover office to say hi, grab a cup of coffee and chat before taking off to go back to the hotel. The change in Ramón is obvious when he stops in to say hi — he is smiling, laughing and eager to talk about what he is watching



on TV (usually something from the History Channel).

On behalf of Ramón: Thank you to all the caseworkers who have been so helpful and caring to him and towards his recovery. And, most of all, thank you to Groundcover staff for their support over the last few weeks (and over the nine years since he became a vendor).

Look, look, my heart is an open book! Musings on land and healing

That song spills out of my mouth occasionally. If you look you may see a heart of scars that are still healing. The stages of the path may require an even deeper level of healing. Some crises may reveal an underlying condition that is a big mystery. Spiritual friends may become the key to the clues you need.

When my ophthalmologist told me that I have vascular endothelial growth factor, my mind went on full alert. When it shows up in the eyes it can cause what is called "age-related macular degeneration." Matt Hoostal, who I know from Pizza in the Park, told me they call it "veg f" in his biology research lab. It appears to form in the gut microbiome, which Matt is studying.

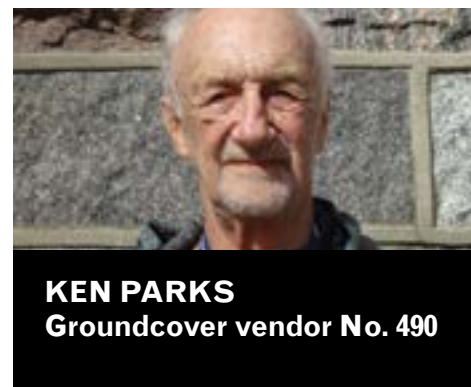
I am an eternal student and have discovered that some wounds and pathologies have a collective dynamic that must be addressed. The gut microbiome is the community of up to 100 trillion organisms that live in the intestinal tract. There are 37 trillion cells in our body so we have an even larger, very diverse community in our gut. Digestion, energy creation and the immune system are all expressions of the gut microbiome. If you have a gut feeling it is from your second brain so-to-speak. The vagus nerve connects the two brains. This is a field of study we need to honor.

We live in a community of modern humans. Dr. Carl Jung and his adventures with and beyond Sigmund Freud have much to offer to intellectual workers who are trying to finish their job. Intellectual work that focuses on how to make sense of the mess we are in is very important. The difference between truth and fiction is that fiction must make sense.

Homo sapiens sapiens is a subspecies of homo sapiens and the Latin word for wise is repeated twice to specify that modern humans are the only survivors of the species.

Some of us may have Neanderthal genes but there are no remaining Neanderthal people. Neander is the name of a valley in Germany where remains were found. They evolved from homo sapiens and populated the Eurasian landmass until some 40,000 years ago.

So when you look in the mirror who do you see? As you mature you will discover many times that you are not who you think you are. One thing is certain, we are sentient beings who are children of this earth. Water, air and sun have also brought us forth. We share Turtle Island with many



KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

relations, both plant and animal. My interdisciplinary studies are beyond my ability to fully master anything, so my eternal student is sometimes the "village idiot."

As Homo sapiens sapiens we learn to think at a young age. Rebirthers have discovered that we make deep decisions at the time of birth. We must be deciders before we are thinkers. Are you happy to be here or not? You may cry with your first breath. As you see, our community life is the context for our individual experience. You live your own life but you don't do it alone.

An understanding of natural law goes far beyond the law of gravity. Quantum mechanics and probabilities are the new paradigm. Making friends with our own mind is the essential task before us, in my humble opinion. As children of the Earth we will discover the sacred nature of Earth and realize that all earthly beings have a place here. So how could we have homelessness and underhoused populations?

It's time to examine social norms and create new ones in some cases. You can take a breath for a fresh start. Other times let the breath rest and observe the mind until you find a fresh mind. Khenpo Choephel from the Karuna Buddhist Center is a good teacher at this point. Many are those who want a more awakened mind. We can enter the Olympics of mind training in which everybody wins. Honor all who have some realization and are happy to share it.

Private property is the main belief of what we once called middle class life. This belief is basic to the compliance culture which arose from the collapse of feudalism. The Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment evolved into the capitalism we know today. We are deeply entrenched in the belief that you must be a property owner in order to be a real human being. Therefore children must be trained to think they do not fully count as human beings unless they

adopt the values of the ruling class ideology. Maybe that's why NASA discovered that most five-year-olds are at creative genius level and that declines as they are socialized into compliance culture.

Let's practice open awareness and imagine how we can use property so as to have a better relation with all the people. Ann Arbor has an ordinance on Accessory Dwelling Units. Jim Clark is helping me understand this ordinance. I believe it opens the door to build tiny homes in backyards or side lots that would be a simple living space. I am looking for folks who have used this ordinance and also those who are willing to explore the possibility. My vision is a small greenhouse, maybe 20'x14' with a living space behind the plants.

I have experience camping out in my house to beat foreclosure in Detroit, sustainable camping at Standing Rock and a base camp community on Carrizo Comecrudo land in Texas. I am ready to begin a discussion on accessory dwelling units and see if we can do a workable model of shared and simple living. We have a design challenge that could be fun as we design a simple house and then clarify the responsibilities of mutual respect and shared living.

I propose we start with a council fire (a shared fire touches on our shared indigenous heritage) and focus awareness of body and earth on the land available. This process will be complete as land is returned to its indigenous caretakers who have an organic connection to the traditions of the first humans on this land. We can begin with the intention to design and build artistic accessory dwelling units until everyone has a safe place to sleep. Some may resemble a small bunkhouse or hostel for travelers. You can do a lot in a small space as nomadic peoples have demonstrated for countless centuries. Look around until you find indigenous connections.

The Native American Student Association is important if you have any U-M relations. They are part of the Tahrir Coalition well known from the camp on the Diag that was in solidarity with the Palestinian people, which also merits your attention. Practice open awareness that creates the vision that Che referred to in his famous quote, "We are realists, we dream the impossible."

The first challenge is the permit and inspection process of the dwelling. I propose that permaculture design be

brought into the ordinance. It looks like an obvious step but also may be out of sync with compliance culture. Peter Bane was once editor of the "Permaculture Activist" which was based in North Carolina. He now has a permaculture project in southwestern Michigan which we could visit. A central research issue is composting toilets. For simple, sustainable living it is probable that permaculture has a better design than the current waste disposal systems that regularly overflow with rainwater. Beaches are sometimes closed due to this inadequate design.

Ann Arbor could be the vanguard by adopting compost as a basic tool of waste management. This approach would be a boon for a variety of ADUs and promote better use of the land. All this would best be done in consultation with indigenous traditions. We may develop a more complete form of land conservancy that focuses more on drainage basins rather than property lines that were created by settler communities who were caught in the land speculation of the 19th century in particular. Homesteading was a source of government income. The Northwest Ordinance laid out the process of populating territories so they could become states.

The number of broken treaties and the current crisis of property speculation, and the poorly managed 2008 economic collapse in which billions were given to bankrupt billionaires by foreclosing on the people. We know from the work of Richard Werner that loans create money out of nothing. Interest is fraud and we need council fire with indigenous peoples to go back to the basics for a fresh start on the social commons, i.e., Mother Nature.

Lee Sprague is important here. His presentation at the 50th Anniversary of the teach-in at U-M and his presentation to the Native American Student Association's and the School for Environment and Sustainability's conference just before COVID is precious history that I hope we can revisit. We need to focus on the next steps that came out of these two events and his presentations.

He began with his quote; it is the essence of his presentation. "We have seen the French, the British and now the Americans. We will still be here when you are gone."

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Cranberry walnut bread

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups of warm water
1 teaspoon dry yeast
3 cups bread flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup dried cranberries
Generous 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
2 Tablespoons honey

Directions:

Mix warm water with one teaspoon of active dry yeast. Set aside for 15 minutes.

Mix everything, including yeast mixture, together into a sticky dough in a large bowl. Cover and let rise for 8-10 hours (until it has doubled in size). Remove dough from bowl and place on a floured surface, form into a ball. Cover and when it has risen one and a half its size, place on parchment paper.



Preheat oven to 450 degrees with a Dutch oven inside of the oven. Place dough with the parchment paper in a Dutch oven and bake for 30 minutes with the lid on. Remove the lid and bake for 15 to 20 minutes more.

A longtime friend brought this to a girlfriends' weekend away and it was enjoyed by all. It is fabulous toasted, with or without butter.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

3	8	4	9	5	7	1	2	6
9	6	7	1	8	2	4	5	3
5	1	2	3	4	6	7	9	8
4	3	8	5	7	9	2	6	1
1	9	6	2	3	4	8	7	5
2	7	5	8	6	1	9	3	4
6	2	3	7	1	8	5	4	9
7	4	1	6	9	5	3	8	2
8	5	9	4	2	3	6	1	7

A	R	O	M	A	N	A	R	C	P	E	A	S
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O	N	U	S	I	D	E	A	A	U	D	I	O
R	E	P	S	L	O	R	D	P	S	A	L	M



St. Francis of Assisi Parish

"If God were your Father, you would love me,
for I came from God and am here;
I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

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